State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Commission on Children

Testimony before the Committee on Children on Proposed H.B. No. 5461
Submitted by Mary Kate Lowndes, Director of Development and Special Initiatives
Connecticut Commission on Children
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Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and Members of the Committee on Children,

My name is Mary Kate Lowndes. I am the Director of Development and Special Initiatives for the Commission on Children, and a Steering Committee member of the Connecticut Coalition Against Childhood Obesity. I am here today to speak in favor of Proposed House Bill No. 5461, *An Act Imposing a Tax on Sugary Soft Drinks and Candies.*

Due in large part to obesity, the current generation of children and youth may be the first in our history to live sicker and die younger than their parents. Children and adolescents who are obese are five times more likely than normal-weight children to become obese adults, and their obesity is likely to be more severe. Obese children and youth are at a greater risk for physical problems, including cardiovascular disease stemming from high blood pressure and high cholesterol, Type 2 diabetes, breathing problems such as sleep apnea and asthma, and joint and musculoskeletal problems. They also are much more likely to suffer from mental health problems including low self-esteem, negative body image and depression.

The most recent CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) cites 26.2% of CT high school students as overweight or obese in 2013. The problem of childhood obesity is starting early and remaining steady in our state. Although a recent CDC study shows a decrease in obesity rates among low-income preschoolers in 19 states, CT was in the grouping that showed no change at all . The societal consequences of childhood obesity also impact worker productivity and national security. Obesity has become one of the most common disqualifiers for military service. The overall toll here is in health, work options, emotions and dollars. An estimated $856 million of adult medical expenditures in Connecticut are attributable to obesity each year.[1]

One of the main culprits in the epidemic of obesity is sugar-sweetened beverages. Drinking just one 12-ounce can of soda per day can increase one's risk of dying from heart disease by nearly one-third.[2] Other studies show that people who drink one to two sugar-sweetened beverages per day have a 26%

[1] Finkelstein, EA, et al. 2004. *State-level estimates of annual medical expenditures attributable to obesity.* Obesity Research 12:18-24.
[2] Yang, Q., & Schmidt, L.A. (2014, February 3). Study Examines Consumption of Added Sugar, Death for Cardiovascular Disease. *JAMA Internal Medicine.* Doi:10.1001.jamainternmed.2013.12991.

higher risk of developing Type 2 diabetes than do people who drink less than one/month.[3] Sugary drinks are the single largest source of added sugars in our diets[4], and they have no positive nutritional value. They are empty calories.

I have attached a graphic from Harvard University that shows the amount of sugar and calories in several SSBs. Some examples: 12 ounces of orange soda has 11 teaspoons of sugar and 170 calories; 12 ounces of cola has 10 teaspoons of sugar and 150 calories. To make matters even worse, calories in liquid form are not satiating the way calories in solid food are, so they do not reduce the amount of other calories people ingest. A 2013 study states that reducing consumption of SSBs will have a significant impact on the prevalence of obesity and obesity-related diseases such as Type 2 diabetes and other metabolic diseases.[5]

The Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, formerly at Yale and now at UCONN, has studied the estimated impact of price on consumption. They estimate that a 10% increase in the cost of SSBs would drive an 8-10% decrease in consumption, and the suggested penny per ounce tax in Proposed Bill No. 5461 is roughly a 15-20% in price, so would assume to cause a 15-20% decrease in consumption.

This is a common sense public health measure, similar to the cigarette tax that has driven down tobacco consumption and thereby improved the health of many, many people. This will also raise significant dollars in a time of very limited resources. Why not improve behavior and bring in more dollars with efficacy? It is estimated to bring in over 100 million dollars.

Specifically, the Rudd Center estimates it will raise $141.6 million[6]; these funds, per the proposed legislation, could go toward childhood obesity prevention efforts, municipal budgets, and the Governor's Scholarship program. The ideal is that the tax on something so unhealthy would change consumer behavior and decrease consumption of SSBs; the consumers that continue to consume the disease-causing SSBs would, were this law to pass, pay a bit toward the costs to the state that come down the road when one ingests these extreme amounts of sugar.

Both the Commission on Children and the CT Coalition Against Childhood Obesity support Proposed Bill No. 5461. Thank you.

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[3] Malik, V.S. (2012, January 31). Sweeteners and Risk of Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes: The Role of Sugar-Sweetened Beverages, *Curr Diab Rep*, 12, 195-203. doi:10.1007/s11892-012-0259-6. http://www.sugarscience.org/sugar-sweetened-beverages/#.VNzZeE10y70

[4] Johnson RK, Appel LJ, Brands M, et.al. Dietary Sugars Intake and Cardiovascular Health: A Scientific Statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*, 120: 1011-1120, 2009. http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/120/11/1011.full.pdf.

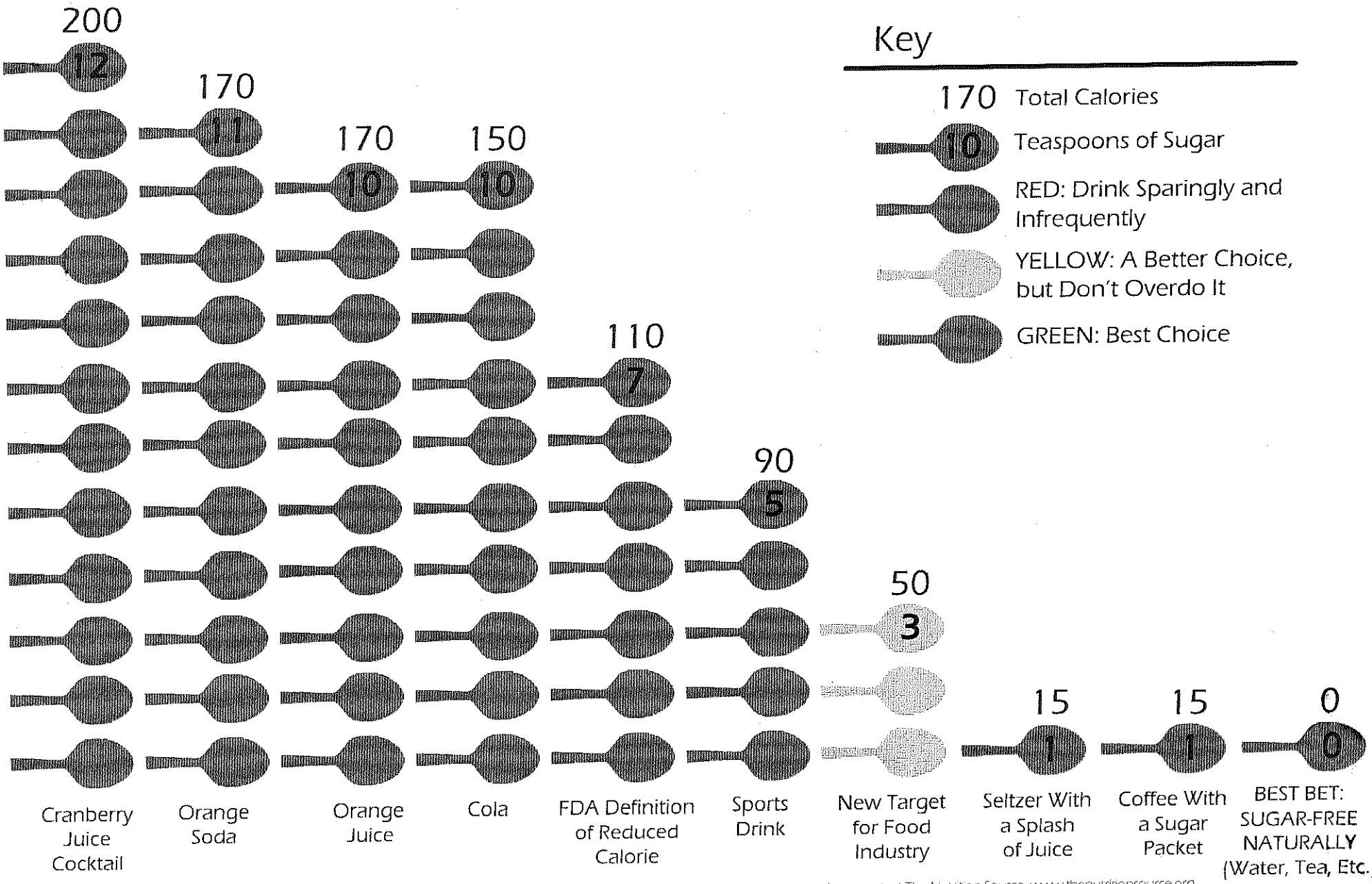
[5] Hu, F.B. Resolved: there is sufficient scientific evidence that decreasing sugar-sweetened beverage consumption will reduce the prevalence of obesity and obesity-related diseases. *Obesity Reviews*, 14: 606-619, 2013.

[6] http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/sodatax.aspx

How Sweet Is It?

Calories and Teaspoons of Sugar in 12 Ounces of Each Beverage

For more information, see The Nutrition Source, www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-drinks/



Key

170 Total Calories

10 Teaspoons of Sugar

RED: Drink Sparingly and Infrequently

YELLOW: A Better Choice, but Don't Overdo It

GREEN: Best Choice

For more information, see The Nutrition Source, http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-drinks/

Calories, Grams of Sugar, and Teaspoons of Sugar in 12 Ounces of Each Beverage

RED: Drink Sparingly and Infrequently >12 g sugar/12 oz

YELLOW: A Better Choice, but Don't Overdo It 6 to12 g sugar/12 oz*

GREEN: Best Choice 0 to 5 g sugar/12 oz

1 TEASPOON OF SUGAR = 4.2 GRAMS OF SUGAR

The Nutrition Source does not endorse specific brands, and the inclusion of brand-name beverages on this list does not constitute an endorsement.

Calories, grams of sugar, and teaspoons of sugar are calculated or obtained from Nutrition Facts information provided by beverage manufacturers' Web sites. Values are calculated with the assumption that all carbohydrate is from sugar. Calculations are approximate, due to rounding. Some products are available in sizes that are smaller or larger than 12 ounces. Beverage manufacturers may change product formulation and availability at any time. Use beverage manufacturers' Web sites as the best source of information on nutrient content.

For complete source information, see www.thenutritionsource.org.

	CAL	G	TSP
Carbonated Soft Drinks			
A&W® Root Beer	180	47	11
Blue Sky® Natural Orange Soda	160	44	10
Coca-Cola® Classic	146	41	10
Fanta® Orange	165	45	13
Mountain Dew®	170	46	11
Pepsi® Cola	150	41	10
Schweppes® Ginger Ale	120	34	8
Schweppes® Tonic Water	130	35	8
100% Juice			
Apple and Eve® Naturally Cranberry 100% Juice	195	48	11
Low Sodium V8® 100% Vegetable Juice	75	12	3
Minute Maid® Orange Juice	165	41	10
Mott's® Plus for Kids' Health Juice Apple Grape	195	48	11
Naked® Juice 100% Juice Pomegranate Blueberry	225	54	13
POM Wonderful® 100% Pomegranate Juice	240	60	14
Welch's® 100% Grape Juice	255	63	15
Sparkling Juices and Sparkling Water			
Fizz Ed.™ Pomegranate Cherry	129	31	7
IZZE® Sparkling Grapefruit Juice	120	31	7
R.W.® Knudsen Lemon Lime	120	28	7
Poland Spring® Brand Sparkling Water	0	0	0
Polar Seltzer® with Vanilla	0	0	0
Sweetened Water and Flavored Water			
Berry Bot® Fortified Water	40	10	2
Old Orchard® FruitSense® Accelerate Key Lime	68	18	4
Glacéau Vitamin Water® Essential	75	20	5
Hansen's® Organic Junior Water™ Beverage	85	23	5
Homemade Spa Water (recipe on www.thenutritionsource.org)	0	0	0
TalkingRain® Twist™	15	3	1
Wild Waters™ Flippin' Fruit	75	20	5
Fruit Punch and Fruit Drinks			
Capri Sun® Juice Drink Strawberry Kiwi	125	34	8
Hawaiian Punch® Fruit Juicy Red	180	45	11
Odwalla® Strawberry C-Monster®	240	57	14
Snapple® Fruit Punch Juice Drink	165	41	10
SunnyD® Tangy Original Style	180	44	10

	CAL	G	TSP
Lemonade			
Minute Maid® Lemonade	150	42	10
Newman's Own® Lightly Sweetened Lemonade	120	30	7
Sports Drinks and Energy Drinks			
Capri Sun® Sport® Sports Drink Lemon Lime	133	28	7
Full Throttle® Original	167	44	10
Gatorade® G™ Orange	90	22	5
Sport owater	53	14	3
Odwalla® Serious Focus™ Apple Raspberry	255	60	14
Red Bull®	165	40	10
SoBe® Adrenaline Rush	195	51	12
Vault™	179	48	11
Iced Tea			
AriZona® Green Tea with Ginseng and Honey	105	27	6
Steaz (Reg) Sparkling Green Tea, Raspberry	135	35	8
Homemade Iced Green Tea with 1 Tsp of Sugar	16	4	1
Homemade Iced Mint Tea, Unsweetened	0	0	0
Honest Tea® Lori's Lemon Tea	45	12	3
Lipton® Brisk Green	130	34	8
Nestea® Sweetened Lemon Iced Tea	125	35	8
Snapple® Earl Grey Black Tea	53	12	3
Snapple® Iced Tea Peach	135	35	8
Teas' Tea® Naturally Sweet Mango Oolong	60	14	3
Coffee Drinks			
Full Throttle® Coffee + Energy Mocha	222	41	10
Iced Coffee with 1 Teaspoon Sugar	16	4	1
Panera Bread® Frozen Drink Caramel	435	62	15
Starbucks® Mint Mocha Chip Frappuccino w/ Whipped Cream	360	57	14
Smoothies and Flavored Milk			
Homemade Fruit Cooler (recipe on www.thenutritionsource.org)	18	4	1
Jamba Juice® Mango Peach Topper™	375	63	15
Naked® Juice Protein Zone® Banana Chocolate	360	59	14
Nesquik® Ready-to-Drink Chocolate Milk, Reduced Fat	300	48	11
Odwalla® Original Super Protein®	285	51	12
Silk® Chocolate Soymilk	210	32	8
Starbucks® Vivanno™ Banana-Chocolate Blend	270	28	7
Stonyfield Farm® Raspberry Smoothie	276	47	11

*Some yellow-category beverages listed in this chart have slightly more than 12 g sugar in 12 oz; they have been included because they are close to the 1g/oz guideline.